

Luke 9:1-6
Holy Assignment
Rev. Jonathan P. Cornell
7-8-18

What does it take to see clearly?

My son has worn glasses for the last four months, and yet he has never been to an optometrist. Nevertheless, he is convinced that he needs glasses. When we wash Christian's face at night and take his glasses off, he squints and holds out his hands like he cannot see.

Some of us need glasses to see what is before us clearly, but seeing clearly is not exclusively a function of our eyes. It is also a function of our heart. In the book of Ephesians the Apostle Paul writes to a group of Christians meeting in Ephesus, and here's what he says: **I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.**

What does it take to see clearly? It may be less than we think.

We are in the middle of the World Cup right now, it's being held in Russia. I wonder if you saw this video that has made its way around social media.

Video

We are continuing a series of messages through the book of Luke, and throughout this Spring and Summer we have seen Jesus move about, traveling the Galilean countryside teaching many great things and healing people of all sorts of conditions. The time has come for them to take what they have seen and heard and go. When a new program or piece of tech is being prepared for launch, it goes through what's called a beta test, where a small group of people are given the chance to put it to use and see how it works. Well today the disciples have a chance to beta test the Gospel ministry Jesus prepared them for.

And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. ³ And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. ⁴ And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. ⁵ And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." ⁶ And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

I imagine Jesus having this conversation with his disciples was a bit like the mama bird getting ready to push the baby bird out of the nest. There's a lot of anxiety, and baby's still forming wings may not be quite ready to take flight, but the only way for that surge of power and blood to fill the wings with strength is for her to receive that last little push.

With the push, Jesus sends his disciples out. This is one of the most important and powerful images we see in all of Scripture. God is a sending God. We worship a God who has a mission, and for

that mission, uses the church. Throughout the Scripture God is always sending people. He sent Abraham and Sarah to start a nation; Moses to free that nation; Elijah and the Prophets to warn that nation; Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild the nation; and Esther to protect that nation. And the pinnacle of his sending activity, himself in his son Jesus to redeem the nations. Why? So that we would be the living and visible evidence of God's presence in the world today. Blessed to be a blessing. **Whenever you receive a gift from the Lord, Jesus is very, very clear that the gift is not just for your benefit. He has given you the gift so that it can be used to benefit the Kingdom of God.**

As Jesus gathered the 12 this time, he says I'm going to give you power and authority. This word power in Greek is a great one, it's the word *dunamis* (dynamic or dynamite). The type of power with which our Lord operates is not a volatile power, but it is always contained and focused.

Think about it – Jesus was given all power and authority from Heaven. Truly, He was fully God and fully man – but He did not use or unleash his power until God had given him the green light to do so at his baptism. Remember times where the disciples urged him to perform a miracle or right a wrong and Jesus would say “My time has not yet come.” Jesus HAD the power, He just was waiting for His Father to give Him the anointing to use it.

It is power that waits for just the right moment when that word of encouragement, or that word of caution, or that act of forgiveness, or the act of generosity may be deployed with pin point accuracy. And when it does its results are life changing.

And this was the moment in the Bible where Jesus gave the disciples His same power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. I want to suggest that though experiences like these might cause us to raise an eyebrow of suspicion, the gifts of the spirit and of healing are very real.

I believe, and I have witnessed the miraculous healing of lives, and I do believe God still works in this way today. You see disease and the demonic are real, there is more to this world than what is observable and measurable. But I think we have allowed our understanding of God's plan for you and me in these areas to be limited them to the extreme and the caricatured. 1 Corinthians 12 the Apostle Paul lays out gifts that God gives to his people, he says in a special way, that is for the good of all: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discern the spirits (authentically spiritual), tongues, and interpretation of tongues. All of these gifts are from the same God, and they are given to each uniquely.

When Jesus sends his 12 unimpressive, unschooled (Acts) the gifts he gave them by the Holy Spirit wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment are the same gifts that he gives us. And sometimes a word of wisdom deployed into another person's life at just the right moment, or a prophetic word (you are going to have a child, or you will be healed from this condition). When the full arsenal of God's gifted and sent people is deployed there is no limit to what the Spirit can accomplish.

Jesus continues, telling them not just what they will do, but how they are to go about doing it.

“Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money. ⁴ And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. ⁵ And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet.”

Jesus sent them out literally with just the clothes they were wearing. Why? Jesus just bestowed upon each of these disciples the untapped power of God – they are now privy to the power of the other-worldly. Jesus is saying to them – stop seeing with your worldly eyes! I have given you the power of God that threw the Universe into existence! Why would you worry about food or tunics? Trust ME. Keep your eyes on ME. If I have given you the power to heal and restore, do you think I'll leave you hungry? It's time to open your spiritual eyes. It's time to finally SEE.

What is it in your life or the life of a loved one that you have been trying to figure out with your five senses and come up short? What problem or area have you turned on its head every which way and cannot seem to fix or pinpoint? Would you allow me to suggest to you today that you may be looking at the situation with your earthly eyes? Maybe now is the appointed, anointed time for you to begin to see the situation with the eyes of faith?

Christ says that the same power and authority He gave to His disciples in this text He gives to us. That's right. You, Child of God, today, are given that dunamis power to change your environment with the power of Christ. You, Child of God, are given the power to heal and to call and cast out evil among you. This is not hocus-pocus, it is Biblical. It's real. And I've seen it happen.

Amy has a dear friend Sarah. Sarah and her husband Sanjay have tried for ten years to have a child. And all through the struggle and strain Amy kept praying and kept saying "Sarah, you WILL have a child." Amy prayed. Amy believed. Sarah went off all dairy, soy and sugar. Sarah and her husband consulted multiple fertility specialists. Amy kept praying and speaking into Sarah's life. "Sarah, you WILL have a child." Sarah took multiple medications that messed up her emotions and weight and mood. Still Amy prayed and said, "Sarah, you WILL have a child." Sarah went through IVF. Three times. Still, Amy kept saying, "Sarah, you WILL have a child." Finally, Sarah and her husband let go. Sarah called Amy and said, "Amy, I don't think it's going to happen." And to that, Amy said "No, Sarah, I have seen it in the spiritual. YOU WILL HAVE A CHILD." And do you know what? Amy's dear friend Sarah, at forty-three years-old, taking no medication, doing no special diet, is right now very pregnant with a healthy baby boy.

Friends, our words have power.

In just a few verses Jesus will tell the 70 that he's sending them out as sheep among wolves, that they are to be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves. There is great power to tell the truth and speak prophetically over someone's life when it's done without pretense or motive. In literature this person is the "Fool" the one who for all their foolishness in the eyes of the world, actually alone is able to see clearly.

Here is the foolishness that Christ is asking you to embody everyday – THAT WHAT HE HAS SAID IS ACTUALLY TRUE! THAT HIS WORD IS TRUE AND IT WORKS IN YOUR LIFE AND THE LIFE OF OTHERS – this is the foolishness of the Gospel that the world does not understand. And so – are you willing to become undignified in order to tap into the power of the unseen God? Are you willing to trust Him with every aspect of your life and the life of your loved ones – to stop trying to 'see' the situation logically or to analyze your way around it? Are you willing to let go and let the dunamis Power of Christ transform your life, your family's life, the life of this church? Are you willing to be sent, wherever Christ is leading you, to be Jesus' hands and feet and eyes in a place so desperate to encounter Him?

It will not be easy. It will mean leaving behind all you know and hold onto. But it will be worth it. When you allow the God of miracles to actually be God, your eyes are finally open.

Jesus warns that there will be people who do not understand your

And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. Power and authority...

What do we believe about healings today?

Healings do happen, some are given those gifts. But those are not the only gifts that the Spirit gives.

What are the other gifts that the Spirit cultivates: words of wisdom, words of knowledge, prophecy, discernment of the spirits, tongues

Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord.

Demons and diseases: there are certainly demonic presences, and physical diseases that infect our lives. But these are not limited to observable and diagnosable. People can be sick with the disease of the mind that says to them: your life isn't worth anything, no one loves you, you are worthless. People can be infected with the disease that says: the only way you can prove your value is how high you climb and how successful you become—no matter how much it hurts your loved ones. Can be cured of the disease of dependence that says that the only way to find comfort is at the bottom of a bottle. Curing a disease of dependence can simply mean helping someone find the resources to discover that God can offer that

Our brokenness and captivity in this life can go so much deeper and more insidious than just physical and psychological ailments. The spiritual cataracts people have on the eyes of their hearts are far more pervasive than we realize. I would venture to guess that everyone of us, if we dig down deep enough, could identify some demon or disease that infests our lives. We are all captive to sin and the pervasive effects of sin. This does not mean that we're bad or defective, it simply means that we are residents of this broken and fallen world.

Take nothing for your journey...

Interesting, why?

Staff (stability and strength), Bag (shelter), Bread (sustenance), Money (provision)

Go as one without power...

Go as one without agenda...

Go as one who is not guided by the values of the day...

Go as one who is dependent upon the hospitality of others...

Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot* –

Buechner: In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, which is one of the mightiest of all preachments, terrible as well as wonderful things happen too. It is the "poor naked wretches" of the world who somehow survive in spirit and the rich and powerful full who are finally brought down by their own power. It is the madmen and fools who turn out to be wise and the wise and worldly who turn out to be fools. Foolish old Gloucester has his eyes put out but then suddenly, for the first time, sees the truth about himself and his sons. Mad old Lear loses his crown and his kingdom but at the last becomes for the first time truly a king. The villainy of the bad sisters is unmasked at last, and the purity of the good sister shines out in all its splendor.

Power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. I want to stop and say a few things about this phrase because this issue of healing is a big question in the church today. Some ends of the church believe very strongly that these same signs and wonders are given to the church for today for the curing of many. Others are more cautious, does God still work in these ways? Are these gifts that the Holy Spirit is still giving to the Church today.

First things is that it is undeniable from these firsthand accounts of the Gospel writers Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that Jesus performed powerful signs and wonders in the sight of many. Blind people were given sight, those without the use of their legs were once again given the ability to walk—and not only walk but leap and praise God in doing so. People without any life left in their mortal bodies (dead folks) were raised back to life, we saw this last week in Jesus' raising of Jairus' daughter.

Then in Acts chapter 1 Jesus says to the disciples "you will receive power (*dunamis*, dynamic, dynamite) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses."

You will do even greater things....